Amendments to the Specification:

[0015] FIG. 2 is an exploded view of the embodiment of FIG. 1. Fig. 2A is a partial enlarged schematic cross-sectional view of the top belt of a livestock bed strip taken along section line 2A -- 2A of Fig. 2. Fig. 2B is a partial enlarged schematic cross-sectional view of the bottom belt of a livestock bed strip taken along section line 2B -- 2B of Fig. 2.

[0031] In the preferred embodiment of FIGS. 1 and 2, the belts 26 and 28 consist of plies of natural rubber and substrates of loom woven fabrics made from synthetic filament fibers. The belts are manufactured using standard belting technology. In one exemplary embodiment, ~~T~~the bottom belt 28, as best shown in Fig. 2B, ~~preferably~~ has at least one ply of a polyester loom woven fabric 28a having a high modulus of elasticity to resist stretching and impact abuse in both longitudinal and transverse directions. The high modulus of elasticity limits the distortion of the bottom belt 28 to thereby keep the bottom belt 28 flat on the floor 52 when the bed is filled with fluid. The at least one ply of polyester 28a is sandwiched between two plies of natural rubber to ensure a fluid tight seal when bonded. The bottom ply of rubber 28b preferably contains additives or has a coating that renders the bottom belt 28 resistant to water, acid, alkali, animal urine and other fluids found in an animal enclosure. The top ply 28c ~~layer~~ of the bottom belt 28 is preferably formed of a bonding rubber containing finer particle sized fillers and closer molecular structure to more easily bond to the fabric ply ~~layer~~ and the bottom rubber ply, and to be more fluid tight.

[0032] The top belt 26 of the exemplary ~~preferred~~ embodiment, as best shown in Fig. 2A, has one ply of a woven mesh material 26a having a nylon weft yarn 26d with a modulus of elasticity less than that of the polyester used in the warp yarn 26e, and in the polyester fabric of the preferred bottom belt 28, such that the top belt 26 may expand under fluid pressure into a convex pillow-like shape. The nylon weft/polyester warp ply 26a preferably has a length to width (warp/weft) strength ratio of at least 2 to 1 to allow the nylon weft yarns 26d running the width of the belt (length of the bed 22) to stretch into convex shape while the polyester warp yarns 26e in the length direction (width of the bed 22) assist the bottom belt 28 in limiting distortion. The nylon/polyester ply 26a is preferably sandwiched between two plies of natural rubber. The top ply 26b of natural rubber preferably contains additives or has a coating that renders the top belt 26 resistant to water, acid, alkali, ozone, bacteria, animal urine and other fluids found in an animal enclosure, and is preferably formulated to resist bacteria, mold and mildew. Further, the preferred top rubber ply 26b is preferably embossed in a uniform manner. Preferably, it is embossed with interstices of not less than approximately 0.0010 inches and not more than approximately 0.0030 inches to provide a low co-efficient of friction against the animal's skin so as not to abrade the hair or cause irritation to the animal, while maintaining a surface that is suitable for the animal to walk on when wet and have no substantial foot slippage. The bottom ply 26c ~~layer~~ of the top belt 26 is preferably formed of a bonding rubber similar to the top bonding rubber ply 28c~~layer~~ of the bottom belt 28, to more easily bond to the nylon/polyester 26a ply and the top ply 26b~~layer~~, as well as to the top bonding rubber ply 28c ~~layer~~ of the bottom belt 28 to provide a more fluid impervious bond between the top and bottom belts 26 and 28.

[0040] Figures 3-7 show a cow 56 using the bed 22 of this invention. Figure 3 shows a cross-sectional side view of a fluid filled bed 22 before use by a cow 56. The bottom belt 28 remains flat on the floor 52 while the top belt 26 expands upwards into a convex pillow-like shape in both the front and rear fluid chambers 38 and 40 due to the presence of the fluid 54 under pressure. Please note that the belt thickness and the expansion of the fluid chambers 38 and 40 are not to scale and are shown in exaggerated form in FIGS. 3-6 to more clearly show the movements taking place. Figs. 3-6 do not detail the fabric plies 26a and 28a shown in the more detailed partial cross-sectional views of Figs. 2A and 2B.

[0041] Any liquid fluid 54 may be used to expand the fluid chambers 38 and 40. The preferred embodiment utilizes tap water as the fluid 54. However, other appropriate liquids ~~and fluids~~ may be used. For example, salt water or other anti-freeze liquid may be employed for beds operated in temperatures which sometimes go below freezing.